

about eight miles northeast of Libby. She died early the next day at Kalispell Regional Medical Center.

According to court documents, Groshelle's 15-year-old son told investigators that his mother had stolen three pounds of marijuana from Hannan. Hannan suspected either Groshelle or her son, the boy said, and said he would kill the person who did it.

Hannan admitted to police that he drove Groshelle to Libby July 29 but said he left her with two friends of hers after they ate dinner at a casino. A witness at the Caboose restaurant and casino, however, told investigators that Hannan left with Groshelle and the other couple.

Another witness reported seeing Hannan on the Haul Road less than an hour before Groshelle was found. He said Hannan pulled out in front of him and headed northeast at high speed, and that a small pickup truck with two people in it was pulled off the road at the same spot.

The occupants of the truck were interviewed by a detective with the Lincoln County Sheriff's Office and said they saw Hannan hit Groshelle on the head with a revolver.

The couple said they met Hannan and Groshelle at the Caboose and decided to drive to the Haul Road to buy marijuana from Hannan. After the sale, Hannan and Groshelle began arguing, they said.

The couple said Hannan pulled a revolver from his waistband and told them to leave, and as they were pulling away they saw him hit Groshelle in the head with the gun.

On Aug. 6, Hannan led a detective to a site off the Fisher River Road where a revolver and a quarter-pound of marijuana were found.

Hannan was arrested on the evening of July 29 at Happy's Inn. Two detectives who were on their way to Kalispell to investigate the assault on Groshelle responded to a report of a suspicious man — Hannan — who had tried to leave without paying for gasoline.

They found Hannan in the woods nearby where he said he was going to spend the night because his car had broken down. They told him to move his car away from the gasoline pumps and continued on to Kalispell.

After the detectives learned that Hannan was the suspect in the attack on Groshelle, additional officers were dispatched to Happy's Inn where Hannan was found still in his car.

## EPA setting up shop in Libby

By Brent Shrum, Western News Reporter

Dec. 8

The federal Environmental Protection Agency is setting up shop in downtown Libby with asbestos testing of area homes and businesses scheduled to begin this week.

The agency plans to rent a commercial building at 501 Mineral Ave. to use as a base of operations in Libby, according to John Wardell, director of the EPA's Helena field office. The office should be operational by Friday, Dec. 10. It will give local residents a place to go to contact the EPA on issues relating to asbestos contamination from the former W.R. Grace vermiculite mine. A telephone number will be published as soon as a line is connected, Wardell said.

The EPA plans to conduct further testing at Raintree Nursery off Montana Highway 37 this week, Wardell said. The nursery was the site of a processing plant when the mine on Vermiculite Mountain was in operation.

Some piles of vermiculite were left behind at the site, but after an initial inspection EPA team coordinator Paul Peronard said there didn't appear to be a public health risk.

The vermiculite produced by the mine contained varying concentrations of asbestos, which occurred naturally along with the vermiculite. The asbestos was considered an impurity, and most of the toxic material was removed at the mine site and ended up in a tailings pile.

After testing is completed at Raintree, the EPA team will start looking at area homes where vermiculite from the mine may have been used as insulation or for drainage in gardens, Wardell said.

"I think there's approximately 25 homes that we'll be sampling based on people who have volunteered to let us come on their property," he said.

Testing of homes will probably begin late this week or early next week, Wardell said. Twenty-five to 30 residents have offered their homes for the checks.

The team will sample for fibers in dust and air inside the homes as well as soil from the yard or garden. The scientists hope to couple the sample results with information provided by residents.

That should give a better picture of how people have been exposed to asbestos and whether there is a current health risk from exposure to asbestos fibers.

Peronard said last week that 200 to 300 homes will probably be tested by the time the EPA completes its work.

Where the EPA's investigation goes will depend largely on the results of the testing that is done this week, Wardell said. If the agency doesn't maintain a local presence throughout the winter and spring, it will be returning in the summer for another round.

"Some of the sampling we feel needs to take place during the summer when conditions are drier," Wardell said.

The EPA turned its attention to Libby following widespread media coverage of respiratory problems among former miners and their families, as well as others who were exposed to asbestos, including people who as children played in the material.

A hearing last Wednesday gathered public input on the requested release of a \$67,000 reclamation bond for the former mine site, now owned by Kootenai Development Company. Reclamation of the site began after the mine shut down in 1990. An initial bond of \$472,000 was issued, but the bulk of the money was released in 1994 after most of the reclamation work was completed.

The Montana Department of Environmental Quality is accepting comments on the reclamation bond issue until Jan. 1.

## Troy council to appoint mayor Wednesday

By Roger Morris, Western News Publisher

The Troy City Council is expected to appoint a new mayor on Wednesday night following Barbara Anderson's resignation last week.

Anderson and the council have been at odds almost since she was elected two years ago and the relationship deteriorated significantly just before Thanksgiving when the mayor asked for the resignations of two council members for obstructing her from doing her job.

Last week, Anderson cleaned out her office at Troy City Hall accompanied by police officer John Thrasher and council member Loretta Jones. Earlier in the day Anderson told City Attorney Mark Fennessy she was going to resign and informed Jones that was why she was removing her personal belongings from city hall.

According to Fennessy that was an indication of resignation and according to state law and the city charter it was enough for the council to act on.

The state law reads: "An office becomes vacant on the happening of . . . the incumbent's resignation." City code notes: "An elected office under this Charter becomes vacant as prescribed by law."

The city attorney said The Western News story last week noting a written resignation is